No. 1

POLITICS AND THE PULPIT:

A DISCOURSE

PREACHED IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NORFOLK, VA.,

ON

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1856.

BY

GEO. D. ARMSTRONG, D.D., PASTOR.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE CONGREGATION.

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J. D. GHISELIN, JR., BOOKSELLER.
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DISCOURSE.

"I WILL WASH MY HANDS IN INNOCENCY: SO WILL I COMPASS THINE ALTAR, O LORD: THAT I MAY PUBLISH WITH THE VOICE OF THANKSGIVING, AND TELL OF ALL THY WONDROUS WORKS."—*Psalm* xxvi. 6, 7.

WE are gathered in God's house to-day, that we may render thanks to him for the mercies of the passing year.

How widely different the circumstances in which we assembled here, a year ago; at the close of "the summer of the Pestilence." The Chief Magistrate of this good old Commonwealth had then recommended the observance of a day of thanksgiving throughout our borders. In every other part of the State, the heart of man—the Christian man—was attuned for the service. No enemy at home, or abroad, threatened our peace. The seasonable alternation of shower and sunshine had caused the earth to yield abundantly, an increase of the seed sown. The harvest had been gathered in, and the barns were

full. Shielded by the good providence of God, and blessed of him, the patriarch father might gather around him, in the old homestead, his children and his children's children:—and only here and there, would there be a vacant seat,—only now and then, would one return, with sad step and slow, to tell of bereavement.

Such was not our lot. We had occasion to thank God that we were not consumed. In honesty, we were constrained to confess, that even in our sore chastisement, "God had not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." Yet the language of thanksgiving, in view of God's dealings with us during the year, was not the language of our hearts. Judah will not fail to praise God, even in a strange land. As she sits down, in her captivity, by the rivers of Babylon, she will sing,—but not the glad songs of Zion. "How can she sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" She will sing,—but not the jubilant psalm her lips were wont to utter as she entered the Temple, at Jerusalem,—'tis a plaintive melody which falls upon the ear. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem," is the burden of her song. In the strong and simple faith in God, his goodness and his grace, which angels feel; which the spirits of just men made perfect feel, we may, and doubtless will, "rejoice always." But here, on

earth, the song of thanksgiving grates upon the ear of him who sits beside his desolate hearth-stone:—Tears will fill even the eye of faith, as it rests upon the new-made graves of the household. Abraham, that mighty man of faith, "mourned for Sarah and wept for her," as he stood at the cave of Machpelah.

In what contrast with all this, the circumstances in which we assemble to-day. Not, that we have forgotten, or would forget, those whose loss we mourned a year ago. But, blessed be God! it is a law of our nature, that time shall assuage the poignancy of mortal grief. It is a law of God's spiritual kingdom too, that as tears wash out the natural eye, and cleanse its vision, so shall they also cleanse the vision of "the eye of faith."

The present, is a period of unexampled health in this our city. In the three months last passed, I have been called to bury no member of this church:—And in all the families connected with the congregation, there has been but one death, that of a child seven years old. Never, before, since I have been pastor of this church, have I been able to tell of such mercy as this.

Our city, too, in its commercial interests, seems to have recovered from the shock it received a year ago. Our harbor, has been sought by as many

sail,—our wharves have been as crowded,—and, our streets as thronged, as in former years. The eye, sees but little if any difference between the Norfolk of to-day, and the Norfolk of two years ago. Whilst some foreboded ruin for us, as the inevitable consequence of the ravages of the pestilence,—many of us, more hopeful, had confidence in the recuperative powers of our city:—But did any of us, as we beheld the desolations made in our midst, anticipate so rapid a recovery as that we see? The tornado sweeps o'er a forest-land; and a scene of wreck and ruin marks its track. The tall oak, of a hundred summers, lies, shattered, beside the shoot of a single season, crushed in its fall. But the dews of heaven descend, and God's showers are poured upon this ruin. The riven trunk clothes itself in verdure anew; the undergrowth, bent and bruised, springs back to its natural position again,—and in the period of one short "circle of the seasons," so changed is the scene, that the eye of the stranger detects no trace of the tornado. In the memory of the past, alone, does it live as a reality. The scarred heart, alone, now, bears marks of the pestilence.

In view of all these mercies—this good providence of the Lord our God—should not we, his people, "compass his altars" this day, and "publish with

the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all his wondrous works?"

The blessings bestowed upon us, as a city, are not the only blessings, for which we have occasion to render thanksgiving to God, to-day. During the past summer, our country has passed safely through a political struggle—perhaps the most threatening—certainly, the most bitter, any of us have ever seen.

A threatening struggle,—threatening the Confederacy of these our States. It is not my purpose, standing in the pulpit, to discuss the nature or the value of that Confederacy. Such themes as these befit not the place. Granting, as every reflecting man must grant, that circumstances may arise, in which the patriot, and the Christian, as a choice between evils, will rather give up our Union, than encounter the yet greater evils at the cost of which it may be possible, alone, to preserve it,—yet, I speak, I know, the thought of every one of you, when I say, that the severance of this Union, in itself considered, is an evil which he must be infatuated who would make light of. The ties which bind us, North and South, together, God forbid that we should ever learn their strength in the breaking! Our Confederation, the deep foundations of which were laid "in days of old,"—the convulsions which

will be mighty enough to overturn it, will shake this land to its very centre.

The summer is passed—and the glorious old banner of the Stars and Stripes, given to the breeze amid the prayers and sacrifices of men who loved their country well and wisely—blessed be God! yet floats before the eyes of the nations. No star has been blotted from its azure field. No hostile shot has torn a stripe of the old bunting. No foeman's hand has trailed its glories in the dust. We were born under its shadow; and under that shadow would we die, and there would we be buried. It sheltered our childhood's helplessness; and we would have our children, and our children's children sheltered there too.

Through this threatening struggle we have safely passed:—perhaps, I ought rather to say, having an eye to the possibilities of the future—through this one act of a threatening struggle, we have safely passed. This one battle—it may be in a "thirty years' war"—has been won. And when I speak thus, I mean, won, not for this or that political party, —but won for our country; our whole country. And we would gladly take it as an omen and earnest of what is yet in store for us, in God's providence, in the future.

A bitter struggle.—The bitterest political struggle

we have ever known. No little of this bitterness has arisen, from the mingling of religious elements with the political issues involved. Religious elements—using that term religious in its widest sense —when mingling with other elements in civil and political strife, as all history testifies, have ever given rise to the deadliest conflicts earth has witnessed. Saul of Tarsus, takes the lead in the first Christian persecution; and whilst other Scribes remain, reviling the name of Jesus, in Jerusalem, he follows his victims unto strange cities.—And he does so, as he himself tells us, because, with conscience misinformed, "he verily thinks that he ought to do many things against the name of Jesus." The Inquisition, is the bloodiest and most merciless of human tribunals, because, in its court, a fanatic priest sits "at the top of judgment."

So, in our own land, and during the summer just past, we have had one of the bitterest political struggles ever known, in large part, because the religious feelings of men have been evoked,—men have been made to feel that in promoting the interest of a party, they were, verily, doing God's service:—because, not the Statesman or the Politician alone, but the Preacher also, has become an active partisan,—in some instances, "mounting the stump,"—in others, doing what is far worse, prostituting the pulpit and

profaning the Sabbath, by preaching politics instead of the Gospel of Christ.

That all this is wrong, radically wrong, will be, I believe, the conclusion of every ingenuous Christian man, under the guidance of his religious instincts alone; even though he may not be able to give a reason distinctly for this his conclusion. As already intimated, that which we have witnessed, may be but one act in a protracted strife, stretching far into the future. Would it not be well for us then, as Christian men, to examine the ground on which we stand, in repudiating and condemning all interference of the Church and the Preacher in political strife; not only, that we may be able to give a reason for our faith to him that asketh it; but also, that in time to come, we may "wash our hands in innocency; and so compass the altars of our God."

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH, AND THE PROMISE OF THE PREACHER, AS SET FORTH IN THE WORD OF GOD, is the subject to which I ask your attention to-day.

The church of God is not—as seems to be taken for granted by many—an institution intended to do all the good which needs to be done in the world, and to wage war upon every form of human ill. There are other institutions, intended to do good and alleviate the ills of life, to enable men to "live in all

godliness and honesty," that are as truly institutions of God as the Church itself. For each of these, severally, God, their common author, has assigned its proper sphere of operation, and beyond its limits, no one of them may safely or rightfully go.

Civil government is one of these institutions. "The powers that be are *ordained* of *God*. Whoso-"ever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the "*ordinance* of *God*.—He (i. e. the civil ruler) is the "*minister* of *God* to thee for good."—(Rom. xiii. "1–4) "I exhort therefore, that first of all, suppli-"cations, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks "be made for all men; For kings and for all that are "in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable "life, in all *godliness* and *honesty*. *For this is good* "*and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour*." —(1 Tim. ii. 1–4.)

According to the plain representation of Scripture, the State is as truly an institution of God as the Church:—And a great deal of the good which needs to be done in the world, is, by God's appointment, to be done through its agency; and a great many of the ills of life are to be alleviated in the same way. Is "a quiet and peaceable life" to be secured for man, it is the immediate business of the State to secure it. Is the evil-doer to be terrified, the civil ruler "beareth not the sword in vain." In his own proper

sphere, the civil ruler is as truly "the minister of God to thee for good," as is the minister of the Gospel. In securing to the Christian man, "a life in all godliness and honesty," the civil ruler has a part assigned him of God, as truly as has the minister of the Church;—And he who would "keep a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man"—"would wash his hands in innocency, and so compass God's altar," is bound to regard these appointments of God. The Church may no more rightfully intrude itself into the province of the State, than the State may itself into the province of the Church. The forum and the court, and all that properly appertain to them, have been given of God to the civil ruler,—the Church and the pulpit, to the minister of the Gospel.

The fact, if fact it be, that the State may not be accomplishing all the good it ought,—that civil or political evils are suffered under its administration,—that it needs reforming, does not authorize the Church to step in and supply these deficiencies, or reform these abuses, any more than a similar state of things in the Church, would authorize the State to interfere. All human institutions—human, in that they are administered by men, though ordained of God—are imperfect in their operation:—and this, not because the ordinance of God is imperfect; but, because sin has introduced disorder into the working

of all earthly things; has put man's nature out of joint. The harp of David gives forth many a wailing note, because sin, with rough hand, has swept the strings. The rose of Sharon, will open with blasted petals, if the hot winds of the desert breathe upon it in the bud. The Church, the State, the Family, we discover evils in the practical working of them all. And such, we believe, will be the case, so long as man, but partially sanctified at best, is "God's minister" in their administration.

"We freely grant, and sincerely rejoice in the truth, that the healthful operations of the Church, in its own appropriate sphere, re-act upon all the interests of man, and contribute to the progress and prosperity of society. But we are far from admitting, either, that it is the purpose of God, that under this present dispensation of religion, all evil shall be banished from this sublunary state, and earth be converted into a paradise; or, that the proper end of the Church is the direct promotion of universal good." —(*Synod of South Carolina*, 1848.)

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in so far as his conduct was ministerial, appeared on earth, as a minister of the Church. As the universal sovereign of all, he might, had he seen fit so to do, have rightfully exercised civil rule, as well as ecclesiastical authority,—have appeared as a temporal king, as well as a spiritual ruler. But such was not his choice; such was not the

purpose of his life among men. Hence, when on a certain occasion, he perceived that the multitude "would come, and take him by force to make him a "king, he departed again into a mountain himself "alone."—(John. vi. 15.) Hence also, when asked of Pilate—"Art thou the King of the Jews?—Jesus "answered him, My kingdom is not of this world: if "my kingdom were of this world, then would my "servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the "Jews: but now, is my kingdom not from hence."—(John. xviii. 33, 36.) As a minister of the Church the example of Christ is a perfect example, and of binding authority upon the minister of the Church in every age.

Notice now—and I shall quote but two, from among the instances which the gospel record presents—how carefully Christ observed the distinction between Church and State,—and as a minister of the Church, avoided all interference with the civil government, within its own proper sphere.

"And they (the chief priests and scribes) sent forth "spies, which should feign themselves just men, that "they might take hold of his words, that so they "might deliver him unto the power and authority "of the governor. And they asked him, saying, "master, we know that thou sayest and teachest right-"ly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but "teachest the way of God truly: Is it lawful for us

"to give tribute unto Cæsar or no? But he perceived "their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt "ye me? Shew me a penny. Whose image "and superscription hath it? They answered and "said, Cæsar's. And he said unto them, Render "therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, "and unto God the things which be God's."—(Luke xx. 20–25).

To say, that our Lord, in this instance, avoided a direct decision of the question proposed, through fear of the Roman governor, is to do him greater injustice than did these Jews who sought to entangle him in his speech. He who hurled at the hypocritical scribes and pharisees—*rulers in the Church*—his terrible anathemas—"Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. —For ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.—Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"—He who, at Jerusalem, when "he found in the *temple*, those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting; made a scourge of small cords, and drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the

oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise,"—if we do him common justice, judging of him as we would of any man, cannot be supposed to have avoided a decision of this question, through any fear of the consequences. The course he pursued, was chosen from higher motives than such as these.

The Jews, in our Lord's day, were a conquered people. The government under which they lived was in many respects an oppressive one. Their rulers were often tyrannical, wicked men. In these circumstances, they come to Jesus with the question —"Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no?" By "lawful," they did not mean—in accordance with the existing law of the land:—but, is it right in itself? Ought we to submit to such a government? Instead of directly answering this question, Christ calls their attention to the fact, that in using money bearing the image and superscription of Cæsar, they admitted that Cæsar was the supreme civil ruler, to whom God in his providence has subjected them. And then, as a minister of the Church, carefully avoiding all interference with the State, and on the principle that "the powers that be are ordained of God," he says—"Render therefore unto

Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's"—he refuses to take any notice of the question of civil right which had been proposed to him—and adds—"and unto God, the things which be God's." This our Lord does, not upon the principles of "passive obedience," as that doctrine has been taught in by-gone days; but as observing carefully the distinction which God has established between the Church and the State.

On another occasion—"One of the company said "unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he "divide the inheritance with me. And he said "unto him—Man, who made me a judge or divider "over you."—(Luke xii. 13, 14.)

Here was a case of alleged injustice, of wrong done; and probably a very clear case, or the appeal would not have been made to Jesus in the manner it was. A case too, in which the civil magistrate had failed—at least, up to the time it was brought to Jesus—to administer justice. How easy would it have been for our Lord, knowing all things, as he did, to have rendered an infallible decision in the case. How easy would it have been for him, armed with the power of a God, to have executed his righteous decree. Does he do this? Not at all. He who never sent away the ignorant—ignorant of God's truth—without instruction; the sick, the maimed, the blind, without healing; the possessed of the

devil, without deliverance,—refuses to entertain this case even for a moment. His prompt reply is—"Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?" Your case is one which falls within the province of the State.—To the civil court must you carry your cause. "My kingdom is not of this world."

The conduct of Christ's inspired Apostles, was always in conformity with the example he set them, in this matter. They lived, and preached, and labored; they planted the church and nurtured it, in countries, where the civil government was oppressive, and greatly needed reforming,—when the State failed in the accomplishment of much of the good which God designed the State to do,—when many of the ills of life, which civil government is intended to correct, were suffered to prevail unchecked,—where person and property were insecure,—where the administration of the finances was a very thriftless and often an iniquitous one,—where the judges took bribes, and the rulers oppressed the people; and the Apostles suffered, in their own persons, in all these various ways. Yet never do we find these heaven-guided ministers of the Church, any more than Christ himself, intermeddling with the affairs of State. Never do we see them taking the lead in political agitation. Never did they, on the Sabbath, lay aside the Gospel, that they might preach civil, or

even legal reform. True to their character of "ambassadors for Christ," they know nothing among those to whom they go "save Jesus Christ and him crucified."—"They teach men publicly and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."—(1 Cor. ii. 2; Acts xx. 20, 21.) Having received a specific commission from the Lord Jesus, their Lord and ours,—"Go ye "therefore and disciple all nations,—*teaching them* "*to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded* "*you*," (Matt. xxviii.) they abide by their commission, to the letter; never transgressing it, by adding anything to, or taking anything from what Christ hath commanded.

In the life of the inspired Apostles, the Church appears, if possible, more clearly than in the general declarations of God's word, a peculiar institution,—and her ministers, a peculiar order of men.

As thus set forth, the Church appears as "a society, voluntary, in the sense that all its members become so, not by constraint, but willingly, but not in the sense that its doctrines, discipline, and order, are the creatures of human will, deriving their authority and obligation from the consent of the members. On the contrary; it has a fixed and unalterable constitution; and that constitution is the word of God.

The Church is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is enthroned in it as sovereign. It can hear no voice but His, obey no command but His, pursue no end but His. Its officers are His servants, bound to execute only His will. Its doctrines are His teachings, which He, as a prophet, has given from God; its discipline, His law, which He as a king has ordained. The power of the Church, accordingly, is only ministerial and declarative. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is her rule of faith and practice. She can announce what it teaches; enjoin what it commands; prohibit what it condemns; and enforce her testimonies by spiritual sanctions. Beyond the Bible, she can never go; and apart from the Bible, she can never speak. 'To the law and to the testimony,' and to them alone, she must always appeal; and when they are silent, it is her duty to put her hand upon her lips."—(*Synod of South Carolina*, 1848.)

Let us apply these principles,—Or, rather, Let us see how Christ and his Apostles applied them—in the matter which has involved the Church so largely, in the bitter political contest we have been called upon to witness during the summer just passed. It has been through the agency of the "slavery question," the preacher, in some instances, has quitted the pulpit and "mounted the stump;" in others, has

desecrated the pulpit and profaned the Sabbath, by preaching politics instead of the Gospel of Christ—and in one instance, within God's house, a contribution has been taken up in "Sharp's rifles"—a Reverend Marker standing up to keep the tally.

The institution of slavery is not something new and peculiar to our day. We know not just when it began to exist among men. As far back as the days of Abraham, when "the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things," we have an inventory of his possessions, given by "the eldest servant in his house," in the words—"And the Lord hath blessed my master "greatly, and he is become great; and he hath "given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, "and *men-servants* and *maid-servants*, and camels "and asses."—(Gen. xxiv. 35.) And we know that when God first gave his visible Church a distinct and formal existence among men, He recognized the relation as existing in Abraham's family, and enforced the discharge of the duties growing out of it, by church sanctions. "And he that is eight "days old shall be circumcised among you, every "man-child in your generations, he that is born in "thy house, or *he that is bought with money of any* "*stranger*, which is not of thy seed. He that is born "in thy house, and *he that is bought with thy money*, "must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall

"be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant."—(Gen. xvii. 12, 13.) And we know further, that when on the top of Sinai, God, with his own finger, wrote the moral law upon tables of stone, instead of writing a prohibition of slavery, as he did of things sinful in themselves, he treats the relation of master and servant as a lawful relation, and in one particular, regulates it accordingly. "Remember the Sab-"bath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou "labor, and do all thy work. But the seventh day "is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it, thou "shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy "daughter, nor thy *man-servant*, nor thy *maid-*"*servant*, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is "within thy gates."—(Ex. xx. 8–10.)

In the days of Christ and his Apostles, slavery existed, not in Judea only, but in every country in which they either preached the Gospel or founded a Christian Church. In Judea, under the operation of Moses' law, many of the incidental evils of slavery were carefully provided against, and the condition of the slaves was far better than among other nations. Yet even among the Jews, almost every one of the incidental evils of slavery existed, on the ground of which so much objection is made to slavery, at the present day, as it exists in our southern States. Amongst the Greeks and Romans,

even the most prejudiced judges cannot but admit that the condition of the slave was greatly worse, than it now is, anywhere in the civilized world.[1]

[1] *Among the Jews.*—"Both the food and the clothing of those, who, for any cause, whatever it might be, had lost their freedom, were of the poorest description. All their earnings went to their masters. They commonly had the consent of their masters to marry, or rather to connect themselves with a woman, in the way which is denominated by a Latin law-term *contubernium.* ("The *contubernium* was the matrimony of slaves, *a permitted cohabitation;* not partaking of lawful marriage, which they could not contract."—*Cooper's Justinian*, p. 420.) The children that proceeded from this sort of marriage, were the property, not of the parents, but of their owners. Slaves were expected to perform any labor which their master deemed it expedient to require of them. The maid-servants were generally employed in domestic concerns, though not unfrequently, they were compelled to engage in those duties, which, from their nature, were more befitting the other sex."—(*Jahn's Biblical Archeology.* Andover Ed. 1832, pp. 180, 181.)

Among the Romans.—"Slaves were held *pro nullis: pro mortuis: pro quadrupedibus:* nay, were in a much worse state than any cattle whatsoever. They had no head in the state, no name, title, or register: they were not capable of being injured: nor could they take by purchase or descent: they had no heirs, and therefore could make no will: exclusive of what was called their *peculium*, whatever they acquired was their master's: they could not plead nor be pleaded for, but were excluded from all civil concerns whatever; they could not claim the indulgence of absence *reipublicæ causâ:* they were not entitled to the rights and considerations of matrimony, and therefore had no relief in case of adultery: nor were they proper objects of cognation or affinity, but of quasi-cognation only: they

With slavery, in one or other of these forms, the Apostles met at every turn. How do they deal with it? Do they denounce slave-holding as *a sin*, and require the master to free his slave, before they admit him to the Church, as a worthy member?—Never—There is not the most distant allusion to slavery, in all the preaching of Christ and his Apostles, as recorded in the Gospels and the Book of Acts. There is not one word that looks to the freeing of the slave, on the part of the master, as a condition of that master's admission to the Church, in the whole New Testament.

could be sold, transferred or pawned, as goods or personal estate; for goods they were, and as such they were esteemed: they might be tortured for evidence: punished at the discretion of their lord, or even put to death by his authority: together with many other civil incapacities which I have not room to enumerate."—(*Taylor's Elem. of Civil Law*, as quoted in the Notes to Cooper's Justinian, p. 411.) In addition to this—"As the seller was bound to promise for the soundness of his slaves, and not to conceal their faults, they were commonly exposed to sale naked: and they carried a scroll hanging at their necks, on which their good and bad qualities were specified.—The lash was the common punishment; but for certain crimes they used to be burned in the forehead, and sometimes were forced to carry a piece of wood around their necks, wherever they went.—When slaves were beaten, they used to be suspended with a weight tied to their feet, and when punished capitally, were commonly crucified."—(*Adam's Roman Antiquities. New York Ed.* 1819. *pp.* 49, 51.)

But what do they?—when God has blessed their preaching of his Gospel, and men are hopefully converted, they receive them, master and servant, into the same Church, baptizing them with the same water,—just as we are accustomed to do, at the South, at the present day. And when the Church is gathered at the Lord's table, masters and servants, they eat of the same bread and drink of the same cup,—just as you and I, Christian hearer, have done, many a time, feeling that "in Christ Jesus, there is neither bond nor free."

The scriptural proof of these statements is abundant—"Let as many servants[1] as are under the yoke, "count their own masters worthy of all honor, that "the name of God and his doctrine be not blas- "phemed. And they that have *believing masters*, "let them not despise them because they are *breth- "ren;* but rather do them service, because they are "*faithful*" (*pistoi*, believers,) and "*beloved*, par- "takers of the benefit. These things teach and "exhort. If any man teach otherwise, and consent

[1] The Greek word here translated *servant*—and the same is true of most other instances in which that word occurs in our English New Testament—is *doulos*. Of this word Robinson in his N. T. Lexicon gives this definition—"In a family, the *doulos* was one bound to serve, *a slave*, and was the property of his master, 'a living possession,' as Aristotle calls him; and never *a hired servant*, the latter being called *misthios* or *misthotos*."

"not to wholesome words, even the words of our "Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is "according to godliness, he is proud."—(1 Tim. vi. 1–3.)[1] Here Paul not only directs the course to be pursued,—but also, distinctly and explicitly affirms, that such are "the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to "godliness." For further proof, see Eph. vi. 5–9; Col. iii. 22, 25; iv. 1; and the Epistle to Philemon.

In the Apostolic Epistle, we have, in several instances, extended catalogues of the sins of heathendom given us, (see Rom. i. 29–31, and 1 Cor. vi.

[1] McKnight's paraphrase of vrs. 3, 4, is,—and I quote McKnight, in part, because of his acknowledged ability as a critical expositor of Scripture; but mainly, because, himself a Scotchman, and writing before any angry controversy on the subject of slavery had arisen in the Church, (his work on the Epistles was published in 1795,) he cannot be suspected of pro-slavery prejudices—"And those Christian slaves who have believing masters, let them not despise them, fancying that they are their equals, because they are their brethren in Christ; for though all Christians are equal as to religious privileges, slaves are inferior to their masters in station. Wherefore let them serve their masters the more diligently, because they who enjoy the benefit of their services, are believers and beloved of God. These things teach, and exhort the brethren to practise them. If any teach differently, by affirming that, under the Gospel, slaves are not bound to serve their masters, but ought to be made free, and do not consent to the wholesome commandments which are our Lord Jesus Christ's, and to the doctrine of the Gospel, which in all points is conformable to true morality, he is——" (*McKnight on the Epistles.*)

9, 10,) and also catalogues of disciplinable offences, (see 1 Cor. v. 11, and 1 Tim. i. 9, 10), and never, in one single instance, extended as the catalogue may be, does slaveholding appear among the sins which they condemn.

The only statement which can be tortured into anything of the kind, is the specification of "men-stealers" in 1 Tim. i. 10. A moment's reflection must satisfy every ingenuous person, that slave-holding, as practised among us now, is as different from "men-stealing," as is land-holding, under the peaceable tenure of law, from the land-getting by fraud and violence, often practised in the early settlement of all parts of the United States, New England included.[1]

The nearest that any statement in the New Testament comes to modern abolition doctrine, is—"Let "every man abide in the same calling wherein he was "called. Art thou called being a servant (*doulos*), "care not for it; *but if thou mayest be free use it* "*rather*. For he that is called in the Lord, being a "servant, is the Lord's freeman."—(1 Cor. vii.

[1] On 1 Tim. i. 10, McKnight has this note. "They who make war for the inhuman purpose of selling the vanquished as slaves, as is the practice of the African princes, are really *men-stealers*. And they, who, like the African traders, encourage that unchristian traffic, by purchasing the slaves which they know to be unjustly acquired."

20–22.[1]) The doctrine of this text is held everywhere, by Christian men at the South, and on all proper occasions preached from our pulpits. Would that it were so in all parts of the country!

This conduct of Christ, and the Apostles, invested by him with authority, and endued with wisdom to complete the organization of the Church, is irreconcilable with the idea that slave-holding is a sin, and the relation of a master, one which a Christian man may not hold with a good conscience before God. Any other view than that we take, involves the idea, that Christ and his Apostles, in their uniform avoidance of this subject, were guilty of an unholy truckling to the prejudices of men, of a jesuitical accommodation of the Church of God to the passions and interests of wicked men. The State, by passing a law, prohibiting slave-holding, may make it a civil offence. The political economist may prove it to be a political evil. But a *sin* no man, nor body of men,

[1] McKnight paraphrases this passage,—"Since the Gospel makes no alteration in men's *political state*, let every Christian remain in the same *political state* in which he was called. Agreeably to this rule, Wast thou called, being a bondman? Be not thou solicitous to be made free, fancying that a bondman is less the object of God's favor than a freeman. Yet, if thou canst even be made free by any *lawful method*, rather obtain thy freedom. But if disappointed, grieve not: For a bondman who is called by the Lord, possesses the greatest of all dignities; he is the Lord's free-man."

can ever make it, so long as God's Word is the ultimate authority in questions of right and wrong.

I may be asked—Does slavery so alter the relations between a man and his fellow-man, that the one, because he is a master, may, without sin, oppress, or cruelly lash, or even take the life of the other, because that other is a slave? Certainly not. The fact that civil government is an ordinance of God, does not make it right for the civil Ruler, having the power, to harass the subject, or to take bribes in the administration of the law. These are abuses, incidental evils, and not part and parcel of the institution itself, either in the one case or the other:—And in both alike, in so far as they are violations of the moral law, they are sins in God's account, and in the account of his Church:—and so the Apostles always treated them.

No book defines more clearly, than the Bible, the relative duties of master and servant; or enforces the faithful discharge of those duties by more solemn sanctions—"Servants, obey in all things your masters "according to the flesh: not with eye-service, as "men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing "God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to "the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the "Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; "for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth

"wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he had "done: and there is no respect of persons. Masters, "give unto your servants that which is just and "equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in "Heaven."—(Col. iii. 22–25; iv. 1.)

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your mas- "ters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, "in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not "with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the ser- "vants of Christ, doing the will of God from the "heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord "and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good "thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the "Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye mas- "ters, do the same things unto them, forbearing "threatening: knowing that your Master also is in "Heaven, neither is there respect of persons with "him."—(Eph. vi. 5–9.)

According to God's word, the Christian Minister is bound to teach the relative duties of masters and servants, just as he teaches the duties of Rulers and Subjects, Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, for this is a part of what Christ hath commanded:— And if, in any instance, these obligations are violated by members of the Church, he is bound to enforce the discipline of the Church against the offender. This is just what the Apostles did. More than this

the Preacher has no commission to teach. Beyond this, the Minister has no authority to go.

What was the practical result of such a course, in the days of the Apostles? And what, have we good reason to believe, will be the practical result of such a course now? Not to destroy the relation of master and servant,—but to remedy the incidental evils which attach to it, existing, as it does, among sinful men. Supposing that the Church could succeed, universally, in enforcing what Christ hath commanded in this case,—so that all servants become "obedient to their masters—with good-will doing service as to the Lord and not to men," and all masters "give unto their servants that which is just and "equal,"—All the incidental evils of slavery disappear. The institution itself remains. But the servant, placed in God's providence in the condition of a servant, can as completely fulfill all the conditions of his being on earth; can as well, and thoroughly prepare himself for heaven, as he could if he sustained no such relation to another, as is implied in his being a servant. Christianity, has never yet had full control of the hearts of all men, in any country: and hence, we see less or more of incidental evil attaching to all the relations of life. But that the conclusion just stated is not a mere speculation, is proven, by the fact, that the Church has, at this time, a

larger proportion of *the laboring population* among its members, in the slave-holding, than it has in the non-slaveholding States of our Union.

Wherever the religion of Jesus has gone, it has always corrected, just as far as it has had power, the incidental evils attaching to all the relations of life. It has ameliorated the condition of the Wife—in heathen lands, the condition of the Wife is that of a menial; the condition of the Child—in Old Rome, the father might take the life of his child as well as his slave; and the condition of the slave also. By teaching the true nature of the relation in which the parties, severally, stand one to another, and enforcing the discharge of their relative duties one to another, it has done all, of substantial benefit, that ever has been done, towards raising the down-trodden, or relieving the oppressed.

But will not Christianity, eventually, put an end to the existence of Slavery among men? I may be asked. On this point, I have an opinion; as I suppose every reflecting man must have:—and that opinion, on a proper occasion, and in a proper place, I hold myself ready to express; and if need be, give my reasons, therefor. In the pulpit, the only answer I can give, is—On this point I can teach nothing, for here, Christ hath given me no command:—"My hand is upon my lips."

Notice, now, the position in which the conduct and teaching of Christ and his Apostles, places this subject of Slavery. They decide, positively, that *slave-holding is not a sin.* They decide further; that this, like all other civil institutions, is liable to abuse, on the part both of the slave and of the master; that in their day, there were incidental evils attaching to it, in its practical working among men, and that it is the province of the Preacher, in so far as his teaching will go; and of the Church, in so far as her authority over her members will go, to reform these abuses and correct these incidental evils. And there the duty of the Preacher and the authority of the Church, ends.

Slavery itself, they treat as a civil institution; and they never meddle with it. The question of the continuance of slavery, as a political question; and they never discuss it—they never utter one word on the subject. The moment you decide that slave-holding is not a sin, all pretext for the Preacher or the Church intermedling with such questions as those which have agitated our country during the summer past, is taken away. The Kansas question, the question respecting the extension of slavery, is a purely political question; and the discussion of it, in the pulpit and on the Sabbath, is as much a desecration of holy place and holy time, as would be a discussion of the

"tariff question," or "the distribution of the public land."

I may be told—slavery is a civil evil, and a political curse. Very well—supposing this be so? What then? Let the State remedy the evil; Let the Civil Ruler remove the curse: And as in this our land—the freest under heaven—the ultimate authority is with the people—Let the people see to it that their Civil Rulers do their duty:—And let all this be done in the same way, and by means of the same lawful agencies, used in other cases of like nature.

But, the Preacher in our country is a *Citizen* in the State, as well as a *Minister* in the Church. May he not, in his character of a citizen, discuss civil and politicals question, like other men? The answer to be given to this question, will be determined by the views we take of the nature and extent of a minister's ordination vows. All, I presume, will admit that *the better course* for the minister, having been set apart for holy things, is, to follow Paul's advice, and "give "himself wholly to them."—(1. Tim. iv. 15.) But if any minister, decide for himself, that it is right for him in his character of a *Citizen*, to enter the arena of political strife—let him remember, that it is as a *Citizen* he enters that arena, and let him act accordingly. Does he feel called to fight Cæsar's battles, let him put Cæsar's livery on,—and not wear the

livery of the Court of Heaven, to do Cæsar service in.

For the Minister of the Church, to lay aside, for the time, his character of a Minister, and, acting simply as a Citizen, to engage in political discussion, *is one thing.* For him, retaining the position of a Minister of Christ, to occupy the pulpit, on the Lord's day, preaching politics, *is a very different thing.* The one, *may be right* in certain circumstances. The other, *never can be right* in any circumstances :—It is a desecration of the pulpit, a profanation of the holy Sabbath.

The anti-slavery Preacher, is not a peculiarity of this our age, a "new thing under the sun," as some seem to imagine. As far back as the days of Paul, such preachers existed, and they troubled the Church then as now :—And with the authority of an Apostle of Jesus, and under inspiration of God, Paul gives Timothy instruction as to the course he ought to pursue with them. "Let as many servants as are under "the yoke count their own masters worthy of all "honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be "not blasphemed. And they that have believing "masters, let them not despise them, because they "are brethren ; but rather do them service, because "they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the be-"nefit. These things teach and exhort. *If any man*

"*teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words,*
"*even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the*
"*doctrine which is according to godliness,* he is proud,
"knowing nothing, but doting about questions and
"strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, rail-
"ings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of
"corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing
"that gain is godliness: *From such withdraw thy-*
"*self.*"—(1. Tim. vi. 1–5.)

Notice, the character of this preacher, as Paul gives it—"*He is proud*"—literally puffed up with pride—wiser in his own conceit than seven men who can render a reason—"*knowing nothing*"—although he dogmatizes as if he knew everything—"*but doting*"—*i. e.*, like an old man when second childhood has come upon him, repeating again and again, the stale sophisms which have been exposed a hundred times—"doting *about questions and strifes of words*"—such, I suppose, as "taking service without compen-
"sation,"[1] "property in human flesh," &c.—

[1] "*The slave does all the work, the master takes all the pay!*" Does he, indeed? "Whence, then, another plea? viz.: that free "labor is more profitable than slave labor—because, forsooth, the "slave gets a greater share of the pay than the freeman—more pay "for less labor: his own maintenance, with that of his children and "parents, and security for the future to boot. In truth, if the needs "of the slave are duly cared for, the master does not '*withhold the* "*earnings of the slave.*'"—(Samuel Nott.) In every Southern State,

"*Whereof cometh envy, strife, railings—blasphamiai, i. e.*, malicious railings—"*evil surmisings*"—*uponoiai ponarai, i. e.*, wicked suspicions—"*perverse dis-*
"*putings* (*gallings one of another*, marginal), *of men*
"*of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth.*" Can we not find, now, those who, had they been living then, might have sat for this portrait, painted 1800 years ago?

Do Paul's words—"railings, wicked suspicions, "gallings one of another—destitute of the truth," seem sharp and harsh? Let me read you a part of an article, published a few weeks ago, in the "N. Y. Independent," a paper—religious, they call it—edited by three Rev'd D. D.'s. "The mass of the popula-
"tion of the Atlantic coast of the slave-region of the "South, are descended from the transported convicts "and outcasts of Great Britain. For a century pre-
"vious to the Revolution, thousands of those offscour-
"ings of the jails and hulks of England, were poured "out on the shores of Maryland and Virginia, the "Carolinas and Georgia—*and nowhere else.* THOSE "WERE THE PENAL COLONIES OF GREAT BRITAIN. O "glorious chivalry and hereditary aristocracy of the "South! Peerless first families of Virginia and Ca-
"rolina! 'Look unto the rock whence ye were

the law compels the master to provide for his slave, not in health only, but in sickness and old age.

"hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were "digged.' Progeny of the highwayman, and horse-"thieves, and sheep-stealers, and pick-pockets of old "England! 'Go, vilest of the vile,' out of all union "with communities of decent origin, and following "your true natural and moral affinities, seek your "real kindred and political fraternities with those "whose ancestors were turned from the ocean-path "which yours took, and founded their 'chivalrous' "colonies in New South Wales and Van Dieman's "Land."

In copying this, for the purposes of exhibiting "the "spirit of the press," the Editors of the "N. Y. Ob-server" remark: "The annals of scurrility may be "searched in vain, to find language more unbecom-"ing a decent press, not to say, a religious newspaper, "conducted by ministers of Him who when he was "reviled, reviled not again." "*Scurrilous, unbecom-ing a decent press*"—true—but not half so discrimi-nating—not half so true to the life as Paul's words—"*railings, wicked suspicions, gallings one of another —destitute of the truth.*"

What shall we do in such a case as this?—Indig-nantly hurl back the denunciations uttered against us?—"fight the Devil with fire?"—God forbid! "Michael the archangel contended with the Devil" once; but he fought not with fire,—his lips uttered no

"railing accusation."—(Jude 9.) 'Twill be an evil day for the Church when the tongue of David learns to rival that of cursing Shimei. Far wiser, the direction of Paul: "*From such withdraw thyself.*" Art thou a minister of Christ?—"From such withdraw thyself." Stand not thou in the company of the "railing" Priest, lest the judgment of God come upon thee, and "thou pierce thyself with many sorrows."—(1 Tim. vi. 10.) Art thou a member of the Church of Christ—"From such withdraw thyself." Be not thou a partaker in their sins.

"*From such withdraw thyself.* Let them alone. It is God's command they are disobeying. And God's Priest may not long disobey God's command, without being known by all as "a raging wave of the sea, foaming out his own shame." The "railing" priest of fifteen years ago, "who would not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness," is the ranting, open-mouthed Infidel and Atheist of to-day. The Bible, and the popular *isms* of the day—the progeny of a pseudo-science and pseudo-religion—are so irreconcilably at variance, that the latter can no more tolerate the former, than the former the latter. Though they may be hatched and brooded within the walls of the Church, they can-

not long stand the blaze of truth which the Word of God sheds around it.

The strife and political agitation of the day—with these the Church, by God's appointment, has nothing to do:—And if she will but follow Heaven's direction, they can never injure her. Her range of operation is higher; far above the storms which gather and rage on earth surface, "of the earth, earthy." They cannot cast even a shadow upon the sun-lit field which God has assigned her as her portion. 'Tis one of the marks of the divine parentage of the Church, that the inheritance assigned her, is so near Heaven.

Man of God—"From all such withdraw thyself," —"Wash thine hands in innocency and so compass God's altar," and it shall ever be thy blessed priviledge "to publish" God's good providence "with the voice of thanksgiving, and to tell of all his wondrous works."